AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

Claims 1, 3, 4 and 8-23 are being amended. All pending claims are reproduced below, including those that remain unchanged.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for classifying email messages, the method comprising:

using each module of a plurality of different modules to determine a level of sameness of a particular email message with one or more prior email messages, wherein each module determines a level of sameness in a different manner than the other modules, and wherein each module of at least some of the modules is assigned a non-zero weight indicative of the module's performance level;

determining an overall ~~wherein the~~ level of sameness ~~is derived~~ for the particular email message ~~from a non-zero weighting and combination of the outputs~~ by combining results of at least two of the plurality of different modules using the non-zero weights assigned to the modules;

evaluating the ~~determining a~~ performance level for each of the different modules that were used to determine the level of sameness for the particular email message;

comparing the performance levels evaluated for the different modules that were used to determine the level of sameness for the particular email message;

adjusting the non-zero weights ~~a weighting~~ of at least ~~one module~~ two of the modules in response to comparing the performance levels, including increasing the non-zero weight of at least one of the modules and reducing the non-zero weight of at least another one of the modules; and

using the overall level of sameness determined for the particular email message to classify the particular email message into a category.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

comparing the number of email messages classified in the category with a predetermined number; and

if the number of email messages is greater than the predetermined number then classifying the category as a first category type; else

classifying the category as a second category type.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the first category type is bulk email.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

accepting a signal from a user input device to indicate processing of email messages in a category.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the processing includes preventing the email messages in a category from being delivered to a user.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the category is commercial email.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein Bayesian analysis is used.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

accepting a signal from a user input device to set a parameter; and

using the parameter to adjust a weighting.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~a module~~ one of the plurality of modules analyzes word count in an email message.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~a module~~ one of the plurality of modules analyzes similarity of text in an email message.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~a module~~ one of the plurality of modules analyzes a similarity of sender addresses.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~a module~~ one of the plurality of modules analyzes a similarity of network routing.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~a module~~ one of the plurality of modules uses a hash of information in an email message.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein a message classification in a bulk category includes a determination of whether the number of email messages in a category exceed a predetermined number, the method further comprising:

submitting email messages in the bulk category to analysis to determine the level of commercial text.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14, further comprising:

preventing messages with a predetermined level of commercial text from being sent to an intended recipient.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14, further comprising:

intercepting the email messages from being sent to an intended recipient;

collecting the intercepted messages for a period of time; and

determining whether the collected messages are bulk messages, and if so, submitting the email messages in the bulk category to analysis to determine a level of commercial text.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, further comprising:

preventing messages with a predetermined level of commercial text from being sent to an intended recipient.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

assigning a lower rating to a module with a low performance level.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

assigning a higher ~~rating~~ weighting to a module with a high performance level.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

preventing a module with a low performance level from being used in a subsequent determination of a level of sameness.

21. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for classifying email messages, the apparatus comprising

a processor for executing instructions included in a machine-readable medium, the machine-readable medium including:

one or more instructions for using each module of a plurality of different modules to determine a level of sameness of a particular email message with one or more prior email messages, wherein each module determines a level of sameness in a different manner than the other modules, and wherein each module of at least some of the modules is assigned a non-zero weight indicative of the module's performance level;

one or more instructions for determining an overall ~~wherein the~~ level of sameness ~~is derived~~ for the particular email message ~~from a non-zero weighting and combination of the outputs~~ by combining results of at least two of the plurality of different modules using the non-zero weights assigned to the modules;

one or more instructions for evaluating the ~~determining a~~ performance level for each of the different modules that were used to determine the level of sameness for the particular email message;

one or more instructions for comparing performance levels evaluated for the different modules that were used to determine the level of sameness for the particular email message;

one or more instructions for adjusting the non-zero weights ~~a weighting~~ of at least ~~one module~~ two of the modules in response to comparing the performance levels, including increasing the non-zero weight of at least one of the modules and reducing the non-zero weight of at least another one of the modules; and

one or more instructions for using the overall level of sameness determined for the particular email message to classify the particular email message into a category.

22. (Currently Amended) A machine-readable medium including instructions executable by a processor for classifying email messages, the machine-readable medium including:

one or more instructions for using each module of a plurality of different modules to determine a level of sameness of a particular email message with one or more prior email messages, wherein each module determines a level of sameness in a different manner than the other modules, and wherein each module of at least some of the modules is assigned a non-zero weight indicative of the module's performance level;

one or more instructions for determining an overall ~~wherein the~~ level of sameness ~~is derived~~ for the particular email message ~~from a non-zero weighting and combination of the outputs~~ by combining results of at least two of the plurality of different modules using the non-zero weights assigned to the modules;

one or more instructions for evaluating the ~~determining a~~ performance level for each of the different modules that were used to determine the level of sameness for the particular email message;

one or more instructions for comparing performance levels evaluated for the different modules that were used to determine the level of sameness for the particular email message;

one or more instructions for adjusting the non-zero weights ~~a weighting~~ of at least ~~one module~~ two of the modules in response to comparing the performance levels, including increasing the non-zero weight of at least one of the modules and reducing the non-zero weight of at least another one of the modules; and

one or more instructions for using the overall level of sameness determined for the particular email message to classify the particular email message into a category.

23. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for classifying email messages, the apparatus comprising:

means for using each module of a plurality of different modules to determine a level of sameness of a particular email message with one or more prior email messages, wherein each module determines a level of sameness in a different manner than the other modules, and wherein each module of at least some of the modules is assigned a non-zero weight indicative of the module's performance level;

means for determining an overall ~~wherein the~~ level of sameness ~~is derived~~ for the particular email message ~~from a non-zero weighting and combination of the outputs~~ by

combining results of at least two of the plurality of different modules using the non-zero weights assigned to the modules;

means for evaluating the ~~determining a~~ performance level for each of the different modules that were used to determine the level of sameness for the particular email message;

means for comparing performance levels evaluated for the different modules that were used to determine the level of sameness for the particular email message;

means for adjusting the non-zero weights ~~a weighting~~ of at least ~~one module~~ two of the modules in response to comparing the performance levels, including increasing the non-zero weight of at least one of the modules and reducing the non-zero weight of at least another one of the modules; and

means for using the overall level of sameness determined for the particular email message to classify the particular email message into a category.